

Experience, strength and hope from Al-Anon members for times when you can't get to an Al-Anon group

Dear Loners

August 2019

I received this from our birthday rally in May and thought you might like to read it too.

Not Standing Still vs Let Go and Let God

Good morning, I am Carol-Anne and I am grateful to be a member of Al-Anon.

When I met my husband, who is a recovering alcoholic and addict, I really had no idea what substance abuse actually entailed. Sure, I knew that my uncle was an alcoholic when I was growing up – but he was a really cool uncle who, when we visited in summer, insisted that we eat ice-cream...with our hands! And I had an aunt who used to get tipsy all the time and squeal with laughter at anything that tickled her funny-bone. But that was about it!

So, being told that the new love in my life was a recovering alcoholic didn't really mean much to me at the time and I certainly didn't hear warning bells of alarm – the only bells I heard ringing were wedding bells!

Two weeks after we returned from honeymoon, my husband relapsed. Can you imagine my shock? I had absolutely no idea how to handle such a situation! It would not be exaggerating to say that I had a sudden and scorching baptism of fire into the world of substance abuse...

In those early days I guess you could say that I lived by the motto highlighted in this morning's session – **there is no standing still!** And, boy, I *definitely did* everything in my power to take control of the situation! I did everything humanly possible to try to keep my husband safe and sober. Some of the things I did included:

- Going everywhere with him (even if it was just down the road to buy cigarettes or milk)
- Installing an app on our phones to monitor where he was when I could not go with him
- I texted all day ... and started panicking if I didn't get a response within a reasonable time (2 to 3 minutes!)
- Once I even jumped onto the bonnet of my husband's car as he was reversing out of the garage (just like you see the cops do on tv shows!) in order to stop him from going out drinking! Crazy, right? But I was not standing still – I was doing something! Hanging on for dear life – my husband's and mine – was definitely “doing something” in my book...

When my husband went out drinking, I didn't stand still either – I did a lot of pacing and fretting, I did a lot of driving around looking for him and I did a lot of phoning to a cell phone which simply just rang!! About a year ago I started attending Al-Anon Meetings and realised, for the first time since I'd been introduced to the disease of alcoholism two years before, that I was going about things the wrong way. Although much of what I learned was new and has taken some practise to start understanding, there was one slogan which stood out to me because it was something my mother used to tell me to do while growing up: ***Let go and let God!***

I realised that I had been trying to play the part of “Super girl” in order to save my world, but I didn’t have any real superpowers so, although I was doing a lot, what I was doing was not actually saving anyone at all!

In *How Al-Anon Works* [B22] I read the following description of “Let Go and let God” on page 74:

“This slogan can be an antidote to the desire many of us have to control the uncontrollable. Instead of relying upon our ego or self-will to direct our lives and the lives of others, we draw upon the strength, wisdom, and compassion of a Power greater than ourselves. Instead of hanging on for dear life, we ‘Let Go and let God’.

We have often been our own greatest enemies, standing in the way of the help we need. When we put this slogan to work, we get out of the way. We let go of the problem, the need to know what will happen and when, the obsession with other people’s choices, the thoughts and concerns that waste our time and energy because we cannot resolve them by ourselves. And we let God take care of them.”

In March this year, after many months of sobriety, my husband relapsed again. This time, when I realised what was happening, I did not fly into Super girl mode! I took a deep breath, went into my closet and simply handed the situation over to God. I literally ***Let go and let God*** take care of the whole situation – and every time my thoughts threatened to fly out of control, I went back into the closet and did some more “*letting go*”. It was not easy to sit back and trust – but I was determined that I was not going to do anything which I have proven, over and over, does not work!

Looking back on this experience I can tell you that the result of simply not trying to take things into my own hands but just ***letting go and letting God*** was almost miraculous. Somehow, I was managing to eat and sleep, despite the circumstances – and I coped better at work, despite the circumstances. I was even quite calm when my husband returned home...

Today my husband is in a treatment centre working hard at recovery – which is also a blessing from Above – and I can tell you with a grateful heart that I am extremely thankful that I found Al-Anon where I have met wonderful people who understand my situation, and I have witnessed with my own eyes how following just one of the principles – ***to Let go and Let God*** – has changed my outlook on life tremendously!

New groups are starting up all over! Please check the website for details. Remember help is a phone call away. We do care and would like to help you. Our office relies on contributions from members to keep this service running. If you would like to contribute our banking details are:

ABSA Bank, Oakdene, branch code 632 005). Current account no 1118881482.....in the name of Al-Anon Information Service . Please put your name or group as a reference .

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